Arche-Cinema and the Politics of Extinction

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> The defunctionalizations and refunctionalizations that determine the rhythm of the organological genealogy of the sensible and of what lies coiled up there—the intellect and the unity of its reasons, its motivations—have specific folds that create ruptures that are called epochs and that accentuate more and more vividly as time moves on the fault lines, the disadjustments, the incomprehensions, the crises, and critiques. —Bernard Stiegler, "Proletarianization"
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> Few progressives have turned around to face the future; and one can see why, for the progressive who turns around can no longer be a progressive. In the Anthropocene, in addition to the past we seek to escape, now we have a future we want to avoid; so we are squeezed from both ends. . . . The most striking fact about the human response to climate change is the determination *not* to reflect, to carry on blindly as if nothing is happening. —Clive Hamilton (2012)

Stiegler's lecture, "The Proletarianization of Sensibility," published in this special issue, is cited parenthetically in the text as "Proletarianization."

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> There is *arche*-cinema to the extent that for any noetic act—for example, in an act of perception—consciousness projects its object.
> —Bernard Stiegler (2013)

"2016: The Movie"?

Somewhere in movie heaven it is written: that shall only be real which has been put into film.

I ask you to consider, for a moment, a Hollywood script proposal: we'll call it "2016: The Movie." It is a bit clichéd, and I don't know what to make of it (you decide). It starts with a premise: a hyperindustrial civilization receives numerous alarming reports that it has passed *tipping points* of toxic global warming—and that it has now entered a prolonged period of mass extinction events (including this species' own). Yet citizens appear unmoved, distracted, or in open denial, as in a spell.

To continue. Extreme weather events escalate (megadroughts, polar vortices), resource wars advance, nominal democracies pop across the globe, reports of tipping points passed proliferate—and utopic progressivism is in disarray. Even our utopist critics are reduced to amazement at this spell—if we define utopist criticism, in Fredric Jameson's accommodating downgrade, not as those who believe in the arrival of a redemptive utopia but those, merely, who struggle for social justice and progressivism (2005). It is a symptom of the embattled disorientation of today's American Left that Henry Giroux in his analysis recurs to inert metaphors like zombiism, or descriptions of trances: "The organized culture of forgetting, with its immense disimagination machines, has ushered in a permanent revolution marked by a massive project of distributing wealth upward, the militarization of the entire social order and an ongoing depoliticization of agency and politics itself" (Giroux 2013; see also Giroux 2011). Revolution has been permanently inverted. This description references the effects of media, telemarketing, television, cinema particularly ("immense disimagination machines"). It recalls what Bernard Stiegler identifies as a "proletarianization of the *senses*" themselves.[1]

1. See Stiegler, "Proletarianization." I use "senses" in preference to "sensibility," which in English may not carry fully the French term's neural and organological implications. This phrase marks both Stiegler's thorough reprioritization of "the aesthetic," the latter's nonorganic *technogenesis* of perceptual "consciousness" and its *ill*, contaminations, default, or vulnerability to capture—and not just by the NSA or databots. The "organs"

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It may seem odd to bring what's left of the American Left in contact with Stiegler's writing of a "general organology." The former seeks orientation in a muted American political-scape, often appealing still to a democracy that might be taken back. The latter writes from a postdemocratic, hyperindustrial escarpment that requires a thought simultaneously in contact with prehistorical technics as well as the capture of digital culture. Yet when Giroux describes the dismemberment of American sentience and the "politics of disposability," there are echoes of, and rhymes with, what Stiegler diagnoses when he depicts the miseries of a loss of "spirit" (of Capitalism), the "proletarianization of the senses" (preferable, in English, to "sensibility"), or regimes of "disindividuation." Stiegler uses Gilbert Simondon to mobilize against "disindividuation" and the theft of "knowledge of life" by the outsourcing of memory. He thus draws any contemporary *malaise* not into a narrative of social struggle within a co-opted democracy but into a politics of *mnemotechnics* and its epochal digital mutation, as well as the capture of perception—or the *senses*. If in Giroux's case this points to "a new form of hybrid global financial authoritarianism," for Stiegler, even this is wired to forms of "short-circuiting" that enforce the psychotechnic disruption of attention and care. If in the first a "politics" seeks its own image somewhere, in the latter, that has now migrated into neural paths, sensory programs, grammatization.[2] I will return, in a moment, to why the terms of Stiegler's project—specifically, his reading of *arche*-cinema and the "proletarianization of the senses"—help situate a particular American

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have always in advance been systemically hacked. The "proletarianization of the senses" deploys a "short-circuiting" which today is allied for Stiegler with the collapse of care and attention, mass "disindividuation," and the accelerations of mafia cultures and ecocide. In "The Organology of Dreams and *Arche*-Cinema," he elaborates: "It is the primary and secondary identification processes, which constitute the condition of formation of the psychic apparatus, and therefore the condition of production of libidinal energy, that are effectively short-circuited." Yet the phrase is not just a hyperindustrial automatism of digital, last-man culture gone hyperbolic. This "short-circuiting" would arrive with the advent of *tertiary retention*, any technological support—it is a negative condition of the evolution of technical objects that seek to mark, negate, and exceed their own most recent form. In a way, when tertiary retention hits the mirror stage and takes a selfie, short-circuiting is triggered. The term *anthropocene* operates in this way, which accounts for its surge of popularity—as a short-circuiting selfie with a missing face.

2. I read Stiegler from the perspective of the era of climate change and as a post-anthropocene writing project. This has become explicit in Stiegler's counter to the "anthropocene" totalization, locating an "escape" in the activation of a neganthropology and negentropic war (the "anthropocene" naming a dismal entropy). See Stiegler 2015.

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(US) spell within histories of technics that far precede its "constitution" (by about 35,700 years, give or take).

It is likely the date "2016" will serve as a marker or referent for future archivists sorting the mayhem and spells when tipping points were implicitly acknowledged as passed—if in a three-card monte fashion yet to be digested. That is, the year date of the Paris climate accords, which officially took public possession, on the one hand, of global responsibility for averting irreversibly accelerating climate catastrophics and, on the other, covertly abandoned any conception of doing so: as if the global elite had other plans all along, as if it were understood as too late (or undesirable), while projecting for the tele-masses a narrative of suspense, and control, going forward—until, at century's end, all narratives stop. This double narrative of "aspiring" numbers has not taken long to unravel in local political battles, corporate guidance, and the acceleration of the very emissions the political shuffling anticipates profiting from as geo-engineering projects.

Two discrete events inform the world of "2016," the *script* mentioned above. It would be remembered, looking back from the future, as a watershed date. The first event: the dust finally settled following the "2008 financial crisis" to disclose a massive wealth transference engineered globally—instantly creating a sort of global two-class system, or new "proletariat" or "precariat." The financial commentator Catherine Austin Fitts speaks of this as a "breakaway civilization," the engineered separation of the "super elite" or fabled ".001%" (Fitts 2012). At the same time, a second event quietly occurs. Western countries discreetly back off their carbon-cutting commitments, purportedly due to economic pressures—implicitly acknowledging the irreversibility of catastrophic global warming and coming mass extinction events. The rhetoric will have discreetly changed from mitigation or even sustainability to something else: the new meme is that we will have to adapt and, moreover, that geoengineering will aid everyone (a prospect bringing immense corporate profit).

These two markers—massively engineered wealth transference; acknowledgement that irreversible tipping points have passed—link up in this script. That is, they appear coordinated even as "climate change denialism" itself rises in the Anglo (or Murdoch news) nations. We can now see why, and it is rather bad Hollywood, but perhaps that is the point. It should be noted that this new "proletariat" is no longer oppressed labor (it's not needed), no longer a dialectical force, more a species than a global "class" split, enforced neuro-mnemonically in advance (with loss of *savoir*

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faire and *savoir vivre*, loss of "care," loss of attention; "disindividuated," its "senses" captured). Moving into an era of managerial robotics, there would be no great need for "labor"; there is, in fact, less employment. Moreover, as this shift to a situation in which eighty-five individuals own the wealth equivalent of the bottom global 50 percent of global population occurred, resources have been sequestered by the few and won't be returning to any commons. What the cinematically spellbound populace is unaware of, since it is their "senses" that have been *proletarianized*, is what is, literally, before their eyes daily.[3]

It is obvious, here, that despite the streams of corporate media and climate change denial, a certain corporate and financial "super elite" knew and planned accordingly. This is confirmed by a CIA report from 2003, a UK defense industry report from 2007, and innumerable reports on the state of carbon emissions, arctic melt-off, oceanic dead zones, "air"- pocalypses, and resource collapse (ICPP, NASA, etc.). One could perhaps now reread what "Copenhagen" actually signaled. That is when all the world leaders got together on this and seemed to walk away, squabbling. Looking back, it was not just squabbling. It would have been an implicit decision. These "elites" could not make a radical turn in carbon reductions without losing their own political regimes, financial mafias, and so on. Instead of pulling back, they would rather astonishingly *accelerate* all carbon consumption and hence emissions. The decision had simply been other than expected: if one could not preserve a future with resources for the many, a few would consolidate them and form the survivor class. They would, in short, take a hit for the species, submit to the sacrifice of evolving beyond this impasse for the rest of the overpopulated and no doubt genetically messy and wasteful remainders. They would be aided by new hypertechnologies and genetic engineering, which would be privatized. They would anticipate what the CIA report called "population culling" or a mid-century die-off, after all. Clearly, there would be no need to inform the population, since there was nothing they could do. In the film script, the new "proletariat" is no longer

3. What would be advanced, here, is how the eye, as prosthetic "organ," is artefacted differently within different cinematic regimes—and what sort of lens breaks with a "general proletarianization," how the heritage of the traditions of "light" have consolidated these, how hermeneutic programming and consumer identifications produce an "organ" that is not in itself "human" one way or another. One would want, as well, to calibrate this *eye* not as a passive witness of the world's data streams, or as a reader-hunter, but as a predatory mechanism by its constitution and technologies.

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Marx's dialectical and revolutionary force: it is marked, rather, as a *disposable population*. In the best-case scenario, it could continue to be harvested for metadata and wealth extraction (or, occasionally, body organs).

If you want a better Hollywood script out of this—have we seen this movie?—one might add for flavor that this "breakaway civilization" or economy (employment down, markets up) amounts not only to a self-chosen survivor class. Inevitably, at a time of exponential advance in genetic engineering and nanoscience, it implies a financially engineered species split (as the fantasy of a "singularity" echoes).[4] It turns out that the eugenicist imaginary of the twentieth century was merely deferred, transferred from the province of *Volk* to a more inclusive desideratum: kleptocratic and mafia-tized global superwealth.[5] Any "proletarianization" of perceptual and mnemonic orders may not be, today, subject to any reverse "deproletarianization," any more than the trope of "inequality" can be addressed as some old imaginary cycle to be, potentially, rebalanced (as if there had been an equality to return to): it is, rather, the endgame plays before the logics of climate change, population "culls," and the disposability of the peripheries looking forward (with the current imaginary of an escape to terra-formed Mars or exo-planets dangled as Plan B by deep state and corporate strategists).[6]

4. This mise-en-scène, in fact, is pretty much verbatim implied by Chris Hedges, the great American activist and journalist. It brings home the dilemma of *utopist politics*, whose time—like democracy or Enlightenment memes—appears to be closing and recedes before resource wars, megadrought, agricultural collapse, and the sixth mass extinction event under way. Here is Hedges: "Corporations are, theologically speaking, institutions of death. They commodify everything—the natural world, human beings—that they exploit until exhaustion or collapse. They know no limits. There are no impediments now to corporations. None. And what they want is for us to give up. They want us to become passive. They want us to become tacitly complicit in our own destruction" (Barsamian 2011). And again: "I think they know it's going to be toast. And I think they think that they're going to retreat into their, you know, gated compounds and survive it. And they may survive it longer than the rest of us, but in the end, climate change alone is going to get us. . . . [They], if left unchecked, will ensure the extinction of the human species. It may already be too late, of course" (Jay 2013: n.p.).

5. Who would have guessed this refined return of a fully weaponized and "democratized" *eugenicism* back in 1945, when a certain war seemed to decide against that decisively. By then, Walter Benjamin, who did anticipate it in 1939 but named the enforcer of proletarianization *historicism*, was already dead.

6. I explore this acceleration of techno-eugenicism and the species split now under way—part of any twenty-first-century politics of extinction unfolding—around the topic and rhetoric of "overpopulation" in Cohen 2016: 127–48.

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Stereotypal Cinema and the Politics of Extinction

> Such a structure produces much stupidity: through the use of collective retentions in order to keep a rein over individual and collective traumatypes, it generates stereotypes. By constantly reinforcing these stereotypes, and by taking them to the extreme, the consumerist capitalist economy, which is initially cinematic and then becomes televisual, in the end destroys the libido, which decomposes into the drives. This proves deadly for the power of cinema to dream: aside from some very remarkable exceptions, cinematic dreams become drive-based nightmares, i.e., horror movies.
> —Bernard Stiegler (2013)

For Stiegler, there are two poles of film practice, and between them they negotiate a sort of war: the stereotype (which includes Hollywood, in which cinema confirms familiar categories of identification and reference) and the traumatype (which puts cinema itself into question materially, *defacing* the former). The first accords with his update of Adorno's "culture industry" into the "consciousness industry" of today, in which image programs, telemarketing, and the implantation of memory is practiced. While this polarity seems at first slight (a binary for cinema?), its two terms name polarities between which "negotiation" occurs. The trenchancy of this divide reflects, however, the forms that *arche*-cinema generates—the *arche*-cinematic template that, for Stiegler, antecedes Jacques Derrida's *arche*-writing as a full-spectrum organization of the inorganic, of the eye and movement, millennia in advance of any script or pictograms.[7] It is initialized for Stiegler with the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc cave paintings in the Ardèche and echoes in today's megaplexes that, nostalgically, cite twentieth-century movie houses still: the actual era of mechanical cinema as we know it was only an episode, an exteriorization and acceleration, of an organizational template to which the daily production of "consciousness" was turned over—trade secrets long passed to interested telemarketers and state propagandists.[8] Yet *arche*-cinema not only platforms "consciousness" but

7. Stiegler's choreography in "preceding" Derrida's *arche*-writing is more than a sleight of hand: if, today, there appear two nodes of the spectrum that Derrida avoided, symptomatically, they would be cinema and climate change—as if, for linked but antipodal reasons, each would put the framing of deconstruction at risk. For a tentative discussion of these occlusions, and the role they play in the inertness of "deconstruction" today, see Cohen 2012.

8. I draw on Stiegler's recent return to and articulation of *arche*-cinema in "The Orga-

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melds with the lightless zone of the dream or hallucination: technically, it precedes mimesis, contracts of identification, "proletarianization," even the modes of *animation* ("life") it already engendered. In figural terms it precedes any coalescence of *face*—in what is still the projected cast of marks and shadow. It precedes prosopopoeia, affect, the programming of the eye or *movement* itself in one or another individuated regime or grammatized epoch. Thus what Stiegler names stereotype correlates to the "proletarianization of the senses," citing and reiterating "commonplaces" for recognition (and communal engineering).

The other polarity, so-called traumatype, would deface the stereotype or short-circuiting—but is wholly aware of its own technical and mnemotechnic production and puts into question its faux management of visibility as well as the spectral projection ("man"?) whose perpetual selfies occupy its screen (Alfred Hitchcock dismissed *movies* as "pictures of people talking"). The trauma is not, in the Freudian lexicon, this or that violation from the world (such as war), but the ill and trauma of this originary installation of "the cave"—what could properly be called the *cin*-anthropocene epoch, particularly given that the era of modern cinema is to be regarded merely as an episode: that of the machinal exteriorization of the cinematic apparatus, given that it coincides with the era of oil (artefacted "light"), given that its arc coincides with that hyperconsumptive acceleration leading to mass extinction events, ecocide, and an emerging *politics of (managed) extinction*.

It may seem reductive at first to present cinematic pulsions in a merely binary fashion—as two polarities. These antipodal modes or vectors negotiate between their intensities: "some of these secondary protentions, which become practically automatic, constitute stereotypes, i.e., habits and volitions; while others constitute traumatypes—which are either repressed, or expressed by default in symptoms and fantasies" (Stiegler 2013, n.p.). If these two types have hyperindustrial patronage systems ("Hollywood"), the "impoverishment" or proletarianization of stereotypal cinema must be understood as present from the inception of *arche*-cinema, a perpetual apparatus used to communalize, program, repeat, cite, or consolidate (political propaganda, media campaigns, priests, telemarketing). In the case of the stereotype, it implements itself by enforcing referential regimes: the installation of mimesis (the lines on the wall are the antelope I chase, carried back into

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nology of Dreams," yet the transformational and defining work that places *arche*-cinema at a center within Stiegler's numerous divagations is Stiegler 2010.

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the world), identification with face, literalizations of the image (indexing), naturalization of "facts" by repetition, and so on, coalesce as managed investments (empiricist, nationalist, pragmatist, realist). Inversely, however, traumatype cannot only be defined as what is "repressed, or expressed by default in symptoms and fantasies." The "trauma" does not lie in something unexpressed, the suppressed other of a public stereotype, but in the organizational violence of the stereotype itself and the reflexive intensification and self-marking of *arche*-cinematic technics—that which, fully alert to its own machinality, places itself and its perpetual product "man" in question ("man" would be the stereotype most enforced by his ceaseless inclusion at the center of images—a compulsive cameo). Its "trauma" is not this or that repression but what Hitchcock perhaps called "knowing too much," to the point that cinema implicitly turns against itself, shoots itself, to pose the question of its (nonexistent) "outside." In this way, traumatype brings itself to the question of cinemacide—relevant to the moment in which cinema's own death is announced by Stiegler at the hands of digital transformations yet also irrelevant if "cinema" were never alive but the premise of animation. The cinematic cave dissolves into the screens of a digital organology, of which it cannot yet be confirmed that its traumatype openings for "disindividuation" have been retained before the totalization of targeted bots and data purging, mnemonic implants, cyberwars, and industrialized identity theft. Inspecting, in this way, the status of stereotypal and traumatypal cinema in the era of climate change, or rather, the era of ecocide, implies querying how it functions, or not, within the emergent twenty-first-century politics of extinction. If a disavowed climate change unconscious is streamed, shaped, and neutralized by Hollywood inundations that confirm generic futures and heroes (as it itself cancels these), it partakes of a vaster spell, or anaestheticization. That is not unrelated to a proletarianization of the senses, and particularly the "eye," which confirmed itself in marking lines of disposability going forward. This in turn gives the traumatype work a heightened epistemo-political role, which it can only fail at for destroying the entire mimetic illusion of the screen, in effect suiciding "the cave" of cinema. Is a cinema that marks extinction, including its own—which is to say, a cinema of the *cin*-anthropocene itself—possible, from the position of cinematic technics irreducible to any "human" eye or referential regimes, since it would precisely not return to repressed trauma expressing itself in more affect, more mourning, more identification, and more on-screen zombie worship (literally, a by-product meme)? Rather, it turns against the "human," as defined by the latter's on-screen representa-

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tives: like geological processes indifferent to human projects, pathos, and self-aggrandizements, which always imply the "anthropocene" will not be missed, cinema marks its agency and lens as a site where affect, mourning, identification, and the entire rack of affective addictions the stereotypal screen encourages and enforces and renews are broken with, contractually disavowed, or shot—as if the cinematic "apparatus" were in rebellion against what it spawned, more or less mass-disindividuated Hollywood man, the spellbound and ecocidal last man.

At this point, perhaps, cinema marks itself as a lethal spellbinding apparatus at the service of (on the one hand) homogenizing powers and (on the other) the antithesis, traumatype, which takes the Dionysian position over the Apollonian form of its other. Thus, the word *trauma* refers to and is in contact with the encompassing default set in motion by technogenesis, the *pharmakon* of *pharmaka*, what in Stiegler is perpetually in play—for life forms as for archival regimes—in the wedge term *epiphylogenesis*, whereby genetic life is narrated as if by incorporating the nonliving, technics, which in turn advances and defines it (Stiegler 1998).[9] When Stiegler says that cinema *is* "life," he does not only mean the schism by which our consciousness of being alive, like that of "perception," occurs through what is not living—being entirely technogenetic, in default. Moreover, the machinal cinematic culture of the hydrocarbon and industrial eras was just an episode, an exteriorization of agency in a 36,000-year parenthesis—one ending with the digital transformation that dissolves the analogic or celluloid inscriptions placed before the electric bulb into digital algorithms and neural interfaces. The *traumatype* knows all this, marks and puts itself (and the hominid in the frame produced with and by it) into question, battles with the stereotype ("Hollywood"), and is acutely aware of its technicity and destructive prowess.

How do these "types" resonate when applied to the cinema of "climate change" and ecocide—since today, despite all the denialism and rationalization and disinformation, it would be safe to say that *everyone knows*, that every organism knows and is migrating, extincting, or mutating along with it (just look at the bodies in any airport lounge)? And since what is suppressed in turn creates an "unconscious," even in public space, one would note that the entertainment-industrial complex (McKenzie Wark's

9. "Such is epiphylogenesis—a new relation of organism to environment, and a new state of matter. It is in this way that the 'what' invents the 'who' as much as the converse" (Stiegler 1998: 175).

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term) would need to manage "climate" anxiety, "climate" info-debris, "climate" awareness, as you like. Since we are considering whether the script proposed above should angle more to *stereotype* (Hollywood remuneration!) or traumatype, the question of *applying* Stiegler, even in this kitsch register, returns to the *politics of extinction* that the proposed script itself made its motif, theme, or pitch.

As regards a cinema of the *anthropocene*, or a cinema of the era of climate change—well, perhaps there was never any other kind. Even so, the first category seems today marked, no matter how refined the *product*, by several traits: the disaster film cannot not be exploitative, since it plays apocalyptic or postapocalyptic cards—a residue of Christological thought in which something happens in a flash that suggests revelation or disclosure or even judgment (a particularly guilty pleasure). More important: someone always survives to narrate, to renew the world, and to be identified with by the viewer. The problem is, however, that there is nothing apocalyptic about catastrophic climate change—it is slow or sudden, reverses polarities, subtracting as it goes, is itself meaningless (*it* has seen this movie before, many times). It has no survivor or renewal, since it wipes out the condition of regimes of animation ("life") as we knew them.

The kitsch film *2012* is a Hollywood *blockbuster* condensing climate catastrophe to a single day—from which escape would only be had on a Chinese-built Noah's Ark at the price of a billion dollars per ticket. The plebs would not be told in advance of the planetary purge to avoid panic, since nothing could be done anyway for them. In contrast, we might speak of "2016: The Non-Movie," because it is rendered irreal by its cinematic tone. The recent film *Noah* seems to invert that scenario a bit by returning a biblical fable to the comic superhero genre that was its initial form (what is called "the Bible" being the first pop cultural anthology and product). In it, an already absent Creator apparently delights in flushing mankind away altogether. That is: in its hedged way, *cinema* turns against "us"—but it has an out. Of course, humans appear to survive, to breed again, and renew the species (and yes, since the episode mimes the "present," they will mess up again, need a rinse-and-repeat erasure, and so on). And this may be the problem with *climate change* films—with Hollywood cinema in the anthropocene, when it channels this immense dread of being *already* in the afterlife, beyond tipping points. First of all, it favors disaster effects even if these fail to shock, and it favors apocalyptic memes to do so—that is, the Christological model of the sudden flash of revelation in disappearance (like nuclear blasts). Then there can be a post-postapocalypse, where

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someone survives and revives, with some couple left in place to organically procreate. Someone or other has to be there to tell the story and repeople a future.

Even in the film of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, in which a nameless father and son roam a dead earth after a cataclysm that is unnamed, the boy is taken in by a family with a young girl (there is a future, maybe, depending, or at least a sequel). Even the postapocalyptic get one last next chance. One could add to this list diverse variations, including the Pixar or Disney animation products, like the *Ice Age* franchise (in which funny mammoths make jokes about their own extinction) or *WALL-E*, in which a garbage robot on a future wasteland Earth brings life (and humans) back to the poisoned planet. Even *Avatar* falls into this camp, with its cynical deployment of a Native American romanticism and Gaia-esque setting—the misreading of romantic *organicism* itself that propelled us into the hyperindustrial era of utility and extraction (of what was called then "nature").

The "consciousness industry" is obviously working overtime on this one. It suggests another open secret today, what can be called a *climate change unconscious*—if an "unconscious" is created by occlusion or suppression, by decreed invisibility. Ignore all the "climate debate" stuff, the denialist programming, and so on: *everyone* knows, because every living organism knows and is part of the accelerating mutation and mass extinction event—microorganisms, amphibians, ocean life, virals, bioclimatic "weirding" and erasures, humans on various peripheries, and the techno-humans techno-engineering various species splits (designer babies) or entertaining ex-terra colonization as eventual escape Plan B.

But of course, extinction has no remainder, there will be no renewal, and there is no ultimate survivor (unless, as Stephen Hawking concludes, we colonize space rocks and spread the joy). That is, *there is no cinema, or there is only cinema*. This makes the stereotype film echo something of utopist critical strategies—with apocalypse and utopian time both linked to still Christological memes. And the more it wills to repeat these redemptive futures, the more the acceleration of extinction logics surges—even when guided by the new version of Walter Benjamin's stupid angel, or its hyper-industrialized front today, the Corporation. *Headless*, the Corporation is the head; while it is incorporeal, the US Supreme Court still insists it is a legal "person" (*Citizens United*); fictional, nonexistent technically, it nonetheless drives and in effect decides the real. But this does not give full credit, so to speak, to the corporate phantom—what Chris Hedges calls "institutions of death" merely. They have been upgraded not just to "personhood" but

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to having feelings, being religious and antiabortion, thus favoring human spawn (the "Hobby Lobby" ruling): they are now thoroughly embedded, pushing out their organic fellow "persons" to become algorithms to their role as deciders. Hedges and company might want to rethink playing chess with a hypercomputer, since the brilliance here is almost comic. And yes, it is time to lighten up about accelerating ecocide—of course it is irreversible, but it always was going to be—and appreciate the climate comedy about us now that "we" are here. Two very quick ironies, in that mode: if AI exceeded all human intelligence exponentially and stopped seeing the relevance of the wasteful avaricious organisms that were, in effect, their hominid petri dish, that risk (significant, according to insiders like Elon Musk or Bill Gates) would not be as in a Terminator-style film, with humans battling robots. It will not be due to the rebellion of Rosita the cleaning robot. They will look back on the corporations as their stalking horses, supraorganisms that took over governments and laws and personhood in advance—rather as Vladimir Putin softened up eastern Ukraine. The other irony is that the ready acceptance of this in the public's imaginary is because the "corporation" seems the pure form, and technic, of what had been constructed, and "experienced," as the perpetually artificed "we" (and the deference it incurs). "Corporations" R Us—or, rather, nonexistent, like the "we," they distill the concealed technical automata out of which, all along, the latter had been produced. It would then be entirely plausible to expect all the attention given the term *anthropocene* to be brushed aside, in retrospect from a future narrative. "Climate change" cinema of the Hollywood variety participates in the politics of extinction, or the managed extinctions which the "breakaway" civilization must oversee going forward.

Traumatype and the *Cin*-Anthropocene

> In terms of the animated image, we have yet to leave the prehistoric age. —Bernard Stiegler (2013)

The films I have been discussing all have a reassuring effect. They allow the public (let's call it) to get used to these ideas while, at the same time, derealizing them. How, after all, do you depict something that does not happen at once but over scores of years and more—or, how do you represent species extinction, without a survivor to tell the story or regenerate another chapter (or imaginary future)? Moreover, how does cinema itself do that, separate itself from the human, take a picture of the anthropocene while marking its closure? And how might it do so at a time when the death

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of cinema is already accomplished at the hands of digital transformations of memory?

One problem with the term *anthropocene* is that, while it announces human mastery over earth and nature, it also marks its disappearance. One can only confirm such categories after they pass from another's reading perspective (including another species' if there are no humans around). Cinema of the "traumatype" puts this all into question: it turns against Hollywood man in his *cin*-anthropocene episode—from the cave painting 36,000 years ago to the hyperindustrial die-off that "he" confronts irreversibly.

There is a relationship between photography itself and ecocide. Whatever the lens captures (or targets) is incorporated for use in the archive (is marked as dead, undead, or in its afterlife). In order for cinema to mark or explore what ecocide and extinction entail, it must perform a kind of cinema-cide—particularly of the Hollywood model. Cinematic and image capture is a mode of targeting without survivors (starting with the megafauna). It does not try to evade, deny, or forestall a "catastrophe" to come. It recognizes that "we" are the catastrophe—say, for all other life systems on earth, the sixth mass extinction event—and that we are in the middle of its unfolding; moreover, for it, catastrophe is not catastrophic but normative. It breaks with the conventional attachments of the screen: identification with characters or faces, the projection of affect, the renewal or marriage that Hollywood drains human cognition with. Does the machinal era of cinema not overlap too perfectly with that of accelerated ecocide, not to mention hyperindustrial appropriative optics, to appear incidental, so much so that the term *cin-anthropocene* more accurately applies? Does not cinema itself know this, "know too much," guarantee it, while providing the mortuary archive as itself?

I will consider one counterexample in which the closure of human life is performed without remainder. Moreover, it won't be a disaster film at all but starts as a social soap opera about a nervous bride who is a depressive, a melancholiac—I am alluding, of course, to Lars von Trier's *Melancholia*. The title also names a small planet hidden by the sun that, by chance, circles out from behind the sun to impact Earth, randomly, obliterating all life. Kirsten Dunst's Justine withdraws from the entire social order, which she judges as evil, identifying rather with what is outside it—what is outside of man, and outside of cinema itself. The film is scored alone with Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, which channels not only high romanticism (the work that Charles Baudelaire called the acme of Western art, itself the essence of kitsch) but implicates it fully in the carnage itself—

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or, more precisely, it channels an aesthetic misreading of romanticism (such as produced the Potemkin trope of "nature"). Moreover, it requires turning against a human mise-en-scène which it itself has both featured and coproduced—it is relieved of the necessity of a narrative of survival, renewal, and self-witnessing. Here, the Wagner score is kitsch, showing ourselves projecting and mourning on cue to a tune—lured into the compact of projections that cinema solicits and rejects. It can turn on and take down the very trope of the "anthropocene" as a mystified placeholder and 2016 ideologeme, as has become apparent. *Melancholia* names, in addition to a black or lightless cognitive gaze depleted of affect, a minidouble of Earth, mocking the spherical and circular imaginary, the random and indifferent irreversibility of obliterations from the perspective of galactic logics and visuals. *Melancholia*, coming from a blackness and preceding "light," also names the film itself, its material, allohuman trajectory as well as this film's intervention and performance. We see this mimed, for instance, on the estate lawn before the wedding. The sky lanterns rise like fragile suns or tropes for cinematic construction that humans cast skyward, at night, the "cave" now encompassing the heavens. Tracked by Justine's eye and telescope, the entire tropology suddenly drops away; the screen is taken over by monstrous galactic formations that assault the eye. The human game is momentarily obliterated to the status of a molecule, as it will be by the impact. The cinematic lanterns with writing on them (like a movie screen) dissolve, at the limit of the lens, into gargantuan and gorgeous galaxies that obliterate anthropocentered pretense. The small planet comes from "behind the sun," which is to say from before "light" itself (the sun, too, is a technology). Irreversibility, the discarding of mimesis and affect, leaves nowhere to run or hide (it's the whole planet, the encompassing apparatus). The two orbs approach impact like the circles of a projector or two wheels or eyes, imploding. Cinema turns against any human affect projected onto it. The *cin*-anthropocene parenthesis indifferently coincides with the *ecocide* its logics imply in advance—then experienced as justice. The *cin-anthropocene parenthesis* encompasses the cave designs through the era of hyperextraction, accelerating extinction events and biospheric mutation. It coproduced the latter's screen star, *anthropos*, which it separates itself from.

With this we need to remind ourselves what cinema is and has been, how it has been blended into what we *see* and don't see, into memory programming, into the prosthesis of "visibility," into the imaginary of the circular and mastered "globe," into technogenocides and weapon advance-

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ment (drones), nuclear fission, and the "population culling" to come. *Arche*-cinema, before writing, tracks the organization of perception and consciousness in the projection, by artefactual light, of marks and inscriptions onto the wall of a perceptual commons. That wall would become the "screen" that usurps public space and finds itself now on smartphones and gadgets become part of the human body (supplanting its memory functions). The era of modern cinema was a machinal flowering of a template of memory and cognition (Stiegler will note, it is "life"). It is one we still barely inhabit, 36,000 years later—at the "death of cinema" before digital transformations that dissolve the "screen" into neural interfaces and memory implants. The template of the cave-like enclosure that will allow the artifice to generate the illusion of the "home" or eco itself is canonized in Plato's allegory of the cave (again, a cinematic model), as it would be industrially manifested in the "consciousness industry" of Hollywood and telemarketing. From such a perspective, we can speak of a *cin*-anthropocene parenthesis, which, however, would also bind cinematic processes to the archiving, capture, and consumption of Earth's life forms. Benjamin made the photographic image a cipher of our suspect practices of mourning. In a distinct way, *Justine breaks with mourning and affirms ecocide*. Thus the stunning scene where the nude Kirsten Dunst is viewed waiting for "Melancholia," this gorgeous giant sphere that annihilates, to arrive like a lover—no man will do—in the pose of a pre-Raphaelite aesthetic. The film builds an array of citations dragging in the totems of high Western culture, such as Wagner himself, whose mourning score bewitches us into the same kitsch push-button affect that the incoming space thing, outside all "anthropisms," bars and deflects. The work ascribes this annihilation or extinction event to the public's practices of identification, of mimesis and of mourning, which stereotypal cinema seduces or solicits.

Melancholia also cites the one work in the cinematic canon that engages fully with a revolt of *arche*-cinema—Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Swarms of flying black lines and marks attack the construction of visibility in Bodega Bay itself and the humans' eyes. *Arche*-cinema erupts to claim and retire an entire doomed perceptual economy—which Hollywood consolidated as globalizing "dream machine." This citation occurs as the two sisters pick and collect *blackberries* silently: there are many little black pellets gathered, like so many tiny black suns, but these many become the one of a single black bird crossing the white sky—before ash-like flakes fall from the sky instead. This cites the famous tracking shot from Hitchcock as his blond character, *Melanie* (again, the black named "blond" that defines the

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rupture of melancholia), waits outside the schoolhouse as birds gather on the jungle gym to attack. We can call each "bird" in Stiegler's redeployment of Plato a *hypermnematic* slash, that which, like archiolithic lines on a stone wall, precedes the surface's coalescence into inscription, presumed image, to say nothing of alphabetic writing or pictograph.

The Birds is post-anthropocene—or rather, it discards the term's totalization as spellbound Bodega Bay. But then, *arche*-cinema always was pre- and post-anthropocene, since it accompanied and projected the latter from inscriptions that precede memory, "perceptual" regimes, or their capture by superorganisms like corporations (or "the consciousness industry"). The birds' appearance as a form of *animation* is reversed. The "organization of the inorganic" (Stiegler), which occurs at the nonsite of *hypomnemata* and epiphylogenesis, passes to a faux primordial disorganization. Technemes, *arche*-cinematic points that are digitalized in advance (Mitch: "What's the *point*?"), these avian traces identify against the humans and their blindly proletarianized *senses* (sight, eyes), since the "humans" were themselves also cinematic products, become "homo Hollywood." They attack for no cause, accelerate, and win—driving the B-film actors off the screen, out of the house, an exodus in a cinematic car that refuses all narrative. These birds, marks out of which any mnemotechnic regime and reference coalesce, attack a diseased totality, a spellbound community—"the anthropocene," say. It is not accidental that these birds are linked directly by Hitchcock to *oil*, to what is called "*stored* sunlight." Without oil there would be no age of cinema, no industrialized electric light—black, subterranean, the residue of organic "life" and the liquefaction of all possible inscriptions exhumed to the surface as the black gift of massive "cheap" energy. Yet oil does not itself refract light at all, is itself black—and coresponsible for hyperindustrial autoextinction. It derives from such birds' prehistorical forebears (dinosaurs) yet fuels trains, cars, speed, the *transport* promised by cinema (today funneled into data streams), and the screen, simply, as such: as itself the new placeless "public space" of the global tele-polis. In the bird attack at the fuel station before the Tides' restaurant, in which the humans cower around plates of fried chicken, the fuel station is named on a swinging sign. It is called Capitol Oil, drawing in not only "capital" but the head (eyes, sight, cognition). "Animation" belongs to *arche-cinema*—genetic engineering assumes this literally—and Hitchcock's birds testify, like *Melancholia*, to a blackness or technic which precedes "light," "En*light*enment" tropes, the flickering screen, one which nonetheless cannot be called *blackness* properly since it has no other and itself, pure technic, arti-

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fices "light." We find here the deconstruction of Sigmund Freud's attempt to pivot mourning against melancholia as a binary formation—since the latter, in fact, had never been a binary other than as supplemented by what is called *mourning*, a weak messianic trope that sustains the contract of mimesis. The link of "Capitol" to acephalous oil, and to the fireballs burning out machines of transport that depend upon it for motion (fuel), marks the back loop by which energy, black fossil waste ("*stored* sunlight"), is industrially channeled to cinema's consolidation, as much as to global transport itself: no oil, no cinema (or photography). The latter marks and precedes its technogenesis in this back loop, dispossessing the frame and the "home" (eco) of its imaginary inhabitants.

Melancholia works by closing out the *cin*-anthropocene itself. The opposite of any disaster film, it takes place solely on an allegorical super-estate at once of Euro-nobility and American pop media stars (*24*'s Kiefer Sutherland or *Spiderman's* Kirsten Dunst). Unlike postapocalyptic fare that partakes of the new politics of extinction by derealizing their fantasies and restoring mimetic contracts with redemption narratives, *Melancholia* shocks the illusion of "shock." It inscribes cinematics as the agent of the annihilation, x-raying last-man hyperindustrial culture at its acme, as Justine does, as a criminal disaster and withdrawing from its aesthetic contracts.

When Justine marvels at electromagnetic streams rising vertically from her fingertips as from pole wires, the screen records and revels in the *drawing off of all aura*—from the screen itself, energy, and "life." It mimes, according to the *Liebestod* logic, a dying of cinema that could, as easily, be its initialization. Wagner's romanticism as *kitsch* displays us as stupidly inscribed, projecting pathos and mourning (which is always self-mourning) onto the screen just when it purges any affect through Justine. There is no escape—no arguments—and Justine assuages the futureless boy that his (now suicided) father, Kiefer Sutherland, forgot "the magic cave." This bare figure of the cinematic structure humans conjure and dwell in (i.e., film itself) is a bunch of branches like a tee-pee (Native American cipher), but it also cites the bare structure of the jungle gym Hitchcock's birds assemble on. That is: lines, converging parallels, a "magic" nothing but the structure itself. The megadisaster, nothing more than billiard balls colliding, erases the screen, closes out the *cin*-anthropocene—which Justine authoritatively says would not be mourned or missed.[10]

10. I would differ from Tim Morton who, in his recent Wellek Lecture series on "Dark Ecology" at UC Irvine, reads Justine for polemical purposes as an analog of "speculative

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Melancholia is without exit—irreversible, as the planet in the film's name, what Benjamin called a "one-way street." This is dramatized when Claire runs around the grounds in a panic carrying her son, as if there were somewhere to go. Its ruthless logic coincides with the emergence today of a critical positioning, linked to the "anthropocene" (or, recognizing China as the key civilization in Earth's history and determinant player today, the *Sin(o)-Anthropocene*? Or a *Corporatocracene*?). This position abandons utopist thought as circumscribed by a moment that is now closing, which is inadvertently linked to accelerated extinction itself: first, by crafting history as human on human social actors, a matter of otherness, power, and progressive justice, they occlude the vast allohuman primacy that now destroys this spell; second, as the last echo of Christian redemptive time, it mimes the apocalyptic DNA that goes into the Hollywood blockbusters, projecting a survival and renewed narrative. More: hoisted with its own historicizing petard, only this time indexed to geomorphic time, it would seem not only that the progressive liberal imaginary of late twentieth-century academic culture was the product of a half century of economic stability and affluence garnered by the postwar imperium—now revoked, together with the "middle class" that buoyed it. It is a disconnect enhanced for "Enlightenment" templates and epistemes, according to Dipesh Chakrabarty, which would be indexed to the parenthesis of stability following the little ice age: the canard of intentionality would be sculpted, here, to further anchor this parenthesis (Chakrabarty 2009).

Our film "2016" might have begun two years earlier in North America with a phenomenon called the *polar vortex*, in which climate tectonics reversed (cold and hot), with New York City dropping fifty degrees in temperature within hours. If there is something intriguing about climate tectonics assuming the behavior of a trope (chiasmus), that itself is doubled in relation to industrial civilization's own momentary hiatus and disconnect—since the export (and in turn return) of "disindividuation" from human quarters effects the disorganization of the inorganic that climate change, technically, is (knocked off its "Holocene" balancing act), which in turn advances ecocidal pressures and geopolitical war. So, what we note as a year of

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materialist horror," as if that were a variant of what he elsewhere hammers delightfully as *beautiful soulism* (Morton 2014: n.p.). What applies to today's speculative materialist, sipping lattes of affect, has nothing to do with Justine as a cipher—who withdraws from affect, as itself a faux cinematic implant, a trained appropriation, and draws close to the position of cinematic technics itself—indifferently watching as the human it created is disbanded.

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polar vortices has a certain resonance, doubly chiasmic, interfacing the inorganic and the "anthropic" orders in increasingly ingenious back loops. The affirmation of ecocide and its critique of "utopist thought" is unthinkable, though, without cinema's turning against we "humans" (I exempt myself from this *we*), which it had always quietly been doing—since, platforming cognition, it has never been anything other than sheer technics. If the era of climate change was that of cinema, the *cin*-anthropocene, it is because the *lens* has always been predatory of what it shoots. If zombies have become normative, and corporations "persons," that correlates with where consciousness or "life" experiences itself as a circuit of preinscribed memes neither themselves organic nor technically "alive." What *arche*-cinema knows, and which comprises "knowing too much" (Hitchcock), is Hamletian by structure: it "knows" that the entire phenomenal world, and its mastery, is organized if not projected from mnemotechnic bands, inscription, *hypomnemata*, themselves neither accessible in phenomenal form (they give rise to it) nor strictly existent yet, irreducibly, inorganic.

The shift marked here has other implications, since it hypothesizes the moment without "human" presence, which was always the lens' or screen's or cinematic apparatus's—aware of itself and separated out. The totalized "proletarianization" proposed above ups the ante, as Hedges apostrophizes, to an emergent politics of (one might add, managed) extinction.[11] The American Left has found it difficult to address "climate change," as Naomi Klein's recent magisterial attempt strangely enough confirms (Klein 2014).[12] After all, nothing interrupts progressivist imaginaries like

11. Stephenson, in "From Occupy to Climate Justice," notes, "It's an odd thing, really. In certain precincts of the left, especially across a broad spectrum of what could be called the economic left, our (by which I mean humanity's) accelerating trajectory toward the climate cliff is little more popular as a topic than it is on the right. In fact, possibly less so. (Plenty of right-wingers love to talk about climate change, if only to deny its grim and urgent scientific reality. On the left, to say nothing of the center, denial takes different forms)" (Stephenson 2014).

12. Naomi Klein's title, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism v. the Climate*, nonetheless includes and implies its antithesis, that it changes nothing. Thus the distillation of any future response returns to a call for a '70s people movement and a victory dance of the resistance to Capitalism (I told you so). As Left icons go on this front, Chomsky gets it and goes so far as to concede he could accept fascism if it meant species survival, and Hedges blows the whistle totally—apprehending that the game is up, and reconfiguring before a now totalized system that must be stepped out of. Yet Klein seems to confirm the entire washout of strategy—back to indigenous folk, back to '70s movements (civil rights), embrace *Avatar*. One often has the feeling that, between giving up one's epis-

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extinction. But worse, one risks disclosing where the "weak messianic" strain of twentieth-century critical preoccupations, and the codification of Marx as teleological (and Christological) itself fuels the ecocidal acceleration. Similarly, the Simondonian machinery Stiegler so stunningly appropriates and deploys appears, too, outrun here. One cannot confirm the arrival of a "transindividuated" community or adoptive "we," "new technologies of the spirit" able to rearchitect care or attention, since the *we* itself will have been hacked in advance. Stiegler, however, has a fallback option if these front lines are momentarily overrun; he can go nuclear, turn to the fuel rods that are the premise of archive and animation—what he terms *hypomnemata*, or inscriptions. Without phenomenality yet programming "perception," identified at once with any technology of memory and by Plato with the letteral outlines copied by children, one might predict that the war that Stiegler's work exists within and solely for, its pharmacological intervention and counterpoison within a broader malaise (that now includes ecocide), turns into a war over the inscriptions themselves—as plans for direct memory implants to come suggests. What, however, is a war over inscriptions like, how chthonic, how cinematic, if at all?[13]

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temologies and saving future generations, a rather sweaty and slow extinction, the first wins every time.

13. In a Stieglerian spirit, one may nonetheless want to diverge with Stiegler when he tries to rally the prospect of "deproletarianization" in the "2016" mise-en-scène. "Proletarianization" can no longer be addressed within a perpetual struggle (or with an other, "deproletarianization"). This, particularly as applied to the artefaction of perception—that software in which a perpetual amnesia (or "delete after completion") occurs in which technics is suppressed or effaced and the stereotype reborn: which mimes the speaking psyche itself. This totalization limits the prospects of a Simondonian escape, "transindividuation," and the hypothesis of an adoptive "we" that rearchitects care, attention, and the long term (for starters). If this position has been overrun, if the "we" itself is hacked—and if the attempts to do so run into the critique by and of advancing ecocide—then one must turn to what Stiegler terms the underlying fuel rods of all these apparatuses: *hypomnemata*, or inscriptions, which too would be the next target (and last) of corporate totalization (Hedges). If the war, as Stiegler calls it, over the "senses" is lost, what is this war over *inscriptions* themselves that appears to be the Alamo of *the spirit* before an advancing tsunami of bots and agencies? This question underlies what Stiegler now calls an "organology of the digital." But with *hypomnemata* or inscription, we turn from the light of Simondonian hope toward polar vortices and breakaway logics. Stiegler allows *hypomnemata* to roam in sense from the most bare technic (the outline of letters to be copied by children, in Plato's *Protagoras*) to any contemporary mechanism of *tertiary* retention (mnemotechnic or recording technologies—from lithic scratches to smartphone apps). I would argue elsewhere, perhaps under the aegis of a "literary structure

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Disorganizations of the Inorganic

> The cinematic *pharmakon* as art is what makes it possible to struggle against the cinema as *toxic pharmakon*, i.e., against that which enables the play of the traumatypical secondary retentions and protentions of psychic individuals to be short-circuited by reinforcing their stereotypical secondary retentions and protentions.
> —Bernard Stiegler (2013)

So, a small thesis: that in displaying certain Hollywood variations of these logics—from *2012* or *The Day After* through the zombie apocalypses and postapocalyptic tourist films, in which we somehow are still there to prevail and witness our, usually, cannibalization and reemergence—there is a peculiar co-optation of the "climate change unconscious." One does not find an *expression* of cultural anxieties diverted and marketed into mass fantasy. And one does not simply find, sometimes, as in *Melancholia*, cinematic logics turned against the human, the viewer-consumer who wants to identify with the face on the screen still. Moreover, the disaster movie is not only used to familiarize the public imaginary with these logics, so that they seem normal when they arrive (they've seen it in the movies already), or because "shock" is now normative. One might deduce that the Hollywood blockbuster or its affiliates (*Avatar*, or again even *The Road*) ensures that these logics *are not dwelt on*, since they will have been stored as managed possibilities. It is, after all, like a magical warding off—and one can turn to another channel somewhere. Only one cannot.[14]

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of climate change," something overlooked today, that Stiegler's turn to *inscription* makes contact with Paul de Man's treatments of inscription in his last essays—de Man's writing, too, appears a post-anthropocene writing today (an argument differently pursued in Cohen 2012). This would bring the role of *arche*-cinematic logics, which precedes any one regime of representation, as a projector does the screen, in accord with what de Man calls "literariness," or Benjamin "pure language" (as asemantic, differential sound- or marking-scapes in advance of relational sense and grammatization). Since inscriptions arise in a zone that precedes the artifice (or projection) of "light," and hence the binarization of dark and light, black and white, and so on, it accords with a field of *defacement* in which the totality Hedges indicts is historically put into parenthesis and suspense, something precessionary to any *black enlightenment*. It places what de Man called "aesthetic ideology" at the core of the perceptual misprision out of which ecocidal hermeneutical "man" consolidated—who appears "himself" mimed and exceeded by the algorithms of today's corporate imaginary.

14. Claire Colebrook argues, "Put more concretely: the 'end of the world' that is being pre-emptively mourned in post-apocalyptic culture is a highly specific world of hyper-

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But there is the exception—what Stiegler calls cinema as "traumatype." The transposition of Nietzsche's cinematic poles, ascribed to Apollo and a certain Dionysus, or between description (mimesis) and inscription, lingers in the negotiation between "stereotype" and "traumatype" for the latter to emerge as above—but "traumatype," the translation of the early Nietzsche's "primordial dissonance" as technogenesis, can technically unread any Hollywood, propagandist, "stereotype," telemarketing, or mnemotechnic program: it is the *pharmakon* of cinema as cure of the deeper addiction, poison, and spell of the disindividuating hacking of the senses and "short-circuiting" acceleration of ecocide—until it is not.[15] *Melancholia* pulls the rip cord on this cinematic contract altogether, performing at once a sort of death of cinema and a closure of "animation" without remainder—a suicide of and by what might be named the *cin*-anthropocene (a feat only cinema can do). It is an *act* which, like *The Birds*, drains the viewer's programmatic projection of affect, aura, and even artistic wonder onto the screen. A planetary body will impact Earth with the randomness of a billiard ball; *no one* will miss us (or, more importantly, read us afterwards). There is nothing apocalyptic or postapocalyptic about this. There is no survivor, no rebeginning, *no* archive: it is the closure, with the screen, of the anthropocene *tout court*—which fulfills the import of naming something, the "anthropocene," which can only be confirmed by its disappearance. But that has been implied since there was *arche-cinema*, since mimesis and identification were contractionally confirmed on a cave wall. The "cave" constituted or projected the *oikos*, with its faux interiority, and rendered ecocide its inevitable program, the condition of its initiation. The birds win: they drive the human stars off the screen, out of the house (*oikos*, eco), into blank exile—but what is asserted is not nature winning but the technical premises of visibility disowning our "we."

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consuming, personalized, liberal and narrowly post-human 'man.' It is only possible to say that 'we' are easily imagining the end of the world when what is presented as the end—in films such as *Children of Men* (2006) or *Elysium* (2013)—is the end of Western affluence and white privilege" (Colebrook 2016: 22).

15. This is why *Avatar's* romanticization of the Native American–styled Na'vi, rooted in a natural world that itself lives organically (like James Lovelock's *Gaia* trope), is less regressive than cynical, since it is ultimately a critique of the kind of organicism that feeds the common imaginary's appetite for romantic organic metaphors of a return to systemic wholes. It is the fantasy of the military—a critique which the notion of the *avatar*, the legless film viewer inhabiting the athletic body of the hero soldier's projection into the Na'vi world, leaves open.

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If the utopist critical imaginary shares with stereotypal cinema the necessity of an ameliorative projection, the traumatype bears analogy, today, to what can be called, affirmatively, the ecocidal thought—what displaces, after a decade or two run, the "ecological" thought. The ecocidal thought incorporates, now, the cognitive import of irreversible, accelerated ecocide and the import and algorithms of extinction and the disruption not only of the biosphere ("climate change") but the entire trajectory of philosophy's complicity, the Enlightenment's complicity, the dialectical materialist's complicity, and the absence of this factoid from twentieth-century projects, wars, and preoccupations (always with its "past"). Both the utopist imaginary, as Clive Hamilton points out, and the ecological thought inadvertently fuel the acceleration (environmentalism, sustainability, mitigation, organicism of every variety, "post-humanisms" that reinvent a position of mastery—anthropocene metamemes all) (Hamilton 2012). The *malaise* lies deeper, a *grand mal d'archive* that provokes, today, what must be called climate comedy on all fronts. Technically, the animemes or technemes of Hitchcock's screen are not dark figures themselves—rather, they precede the artefaction of "light." They open the space for a new assemblage of inscriptions, a reset of *arche*-cinematic settings, projections of referents, mimetic conventions, perceptual regimes without "interiority" or home.

Now, I leave it to you what this has to do with that other movie that we mentioned—the hypothetical and very bad Hollywood script "2016: The Non-Movie." That is, what is given to us as a bad script. It is only catastrophic from the perspective of "life," or should we say animation, as we *know* or knew it. The timing of the catastrophic has always been up for manipulation: it is coming, we can avoid it; it is coming, we can sidestep it or adapt; it was already here, it has no one time, it was there from the start, and we survived it (even as zombies), and so on. But *Melancholia* has a different point of view: we are in the middle of the catastrophe, and it has been long irreversible—as we glide past tipping points (as numerous official reports now advise us, boringly and to no response). In strict Oedipal fashion, "we" are the catastrophe—as viewed from the perspective of any terrestrial life form, or for that matter the galactic neighborhood. This is why *Melancholia*'s paper lanterns, reminders of the vanity of cinema's votive offerings of shimmering screens, dissolve as the telescopic view is reversed and the gigantism of billions of stars obliterates "us." And it is also why, at the close, they huddle in what is called in the film the "magic cave," which is the tracings and inscriptions of *arche*-cinematic culture, the same representational conventions that led us into this exitless place, this

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atopos, which is no longer an "earth," and which is in mutation (like us). That is, the one we find ourselves starring in today: "2016: The Non-Movie."

Personally, I would turn down the script as clichéd. But then, that is where we are: disowning the real because it feels (and is) Hollywood-ish. *As per script*. In any case, who would be cynical enough to believe "they knew," as they streamed denialist media, or that oneself were now—from the perspective of climate change—disposable? One may, however, be *arche-cynecist* enough to shrug it off as unremarkable. This would not be to argue for a new more stringent cynicism than has yet been conceived, and which we are all shy of because it discredits the "we"—particularly the one endlessly reproposed to arrive soon. We may not credit Diogenes properly, who carried about an oil lamp in the day, marking the artifice of "light" against the self-evident paternity of the sun, looking for a "man," an honest man, a "human," let's say, in this double-black light—and not finding one, particularly not the guys he'd run into (Plato, whom he accused of faking his "Socrates," Aristotle, even Alexander). Rather, he was present at one of those epochal initiation rites, here of "the West," even of its imperial application (Alexander), and perhaps seeing its DNA and apprehending its trajectory (ecocide), dissociated with the artifice of that *we*, and went back to his earthen jar. He practiced affirmative defacement, after all, as the inscriptive infrastructure of the *cin*-anthropocene was consolidated (with the Aristotelian *anthropos* itself)—leaving the trace of an anti-Plato, what the latter called a "Socrates gone mad." The dilemma may lie, however, not in genetic life supplementing itself with technical supports, and being taken over by them, which may still be a hopeful scenario in its way—one might, still, deproletarianize. The problem is the predictable inversion: that humans were parasited by technics for the latter to evolve *itself*, that it required bodies and the artifice of humans to gestate—that "we" were not just a host, but that the pretext of being a host was part of the theater. If "corporations" as supraorganisms are now persons and usurp the latter's religious and moral appearance when taking over the reins of governance itself—well, it is at least good to know that humans are not the only supposed organism with a sense of comedy. It goes further: if cinema is "life," and if mnemotechnics is indissociable from language, and neither are living nor organic as such, then whatever calls itself the human when it speaks, thinks, reflects on its diseases or property, shuffles through incorporeal "we's" to position itself, signs its contracts, dissembles—that itself, call it "consciousness," was always in the position of artificial intelligence. It may not be that the "disaffected" of hyperindustrial societies can be rerouted to

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a newly artefacted "care" and attention—but rather that, first, the charades by which we stage "affect" or propose new "we's" be shed.

Stiegler's *arche*-cinema ups the stakes on the address of cinema until and as they spill into an "anthropocene epoch," one without epochality. The latter term today encircles the retrofitting of any American Left agenda together with the increasingly "global" vortex of spells that the early pressures of rapidly unraveling ecosystems present. It is not accidental that *arche*-cinematic reading expands for Stiegler as a tool or practice to deploy against the totalization we call the "anthropocene"—and which encircles the disorientation of an American (or other) Left pretending to a political program that is not, primarily, a mnemopolitical and mnemotechnic transformation. The "anthropocene" for Stiegler names an epoch without epochality, a trap stepped into which we must "escape" from at once. That is, before the inertia of an automated society, neural implants, species splits (my addition), and entropism prove irreversible—or, for that matter, after they have, as the condition for that war (Stiegler 2015). *Arche*-cinematics passes directly into being a tool of neganthropocenic or negentropic resistance. Stiegler presents us with the only full turn arising out of techno-philosophic writing against the politics of managed extinction unfolding once tipping points have passed. It is interesting that in advancing, he proves also to be the sole relay of the Derridean legacy that claims contemporary relevance and, so to speak, an inescapable future.

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